

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 7, and 8 are all the claims pending in the application. By this amendment, claims 4-6 have been canceled, and claims 7 and 8 have been added. Claim 1 is the only remaining independent claim.

Information Disclosure Statement

As a preliminary matter, the Examiner alleges that the Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) filed June 21, 2006, fails to comply with 37 C.F.R. §1.98(a)(2), which requires a legible copy of each cited foreign patent document. Apparently, the International Bureau did not forward copies of several references listed in the IDS to the Examiner.

Therefore, Applicant submits herewith copies of the previously listed references that have not been considered by the Examiner. With respect to listed document JP 2002-106589 A, this document corresponds to U.S. pre-grant publication no. US 2002- 0052243.

Objections

The Examiner has objected to the Abstract, alleging that it is too long. In response, Applicant has amended the Abstract.

The Examiner has also objected to the specification. In response, Applicant has amended the specification at page 7.

The Examiner has also objected to claims 1, 2, and 4 due to minor informalities. Applicant has amended the claims to address these informalities.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and 103

Claims 1-6 are all the claims pending in the present application. Claims 1, 2, and 4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Nagaya (WO 02083446).¹

Claims 3, 5, and 6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly be unpatentable over Nagaya in view of Asai (JP O7-279987).

Applicant has amended claim 1 so that it recites that the guide portions comprise *stepped portions formed in both sides of the intermediate plate*. This amendment is supported in the original specification at least by the exemplary embodiment shown in FIGS. 2(a) and 2(b) in which stepped portions 12m, 12n are provided in both sides of the intermediate plate 11B. By forming stepped surfaces in the intermediate plate, the thickness and weight of the coupling can be reduced.² Moreover, the stepped surfaces allow the roller members to smoothly move back and forth.

Applicant respectfully submits that Nagaya does not disclose all of the recitations of amended claim 1. For example, Nagaya at FIGS. 16-19 merely discloses guides 18p, 18q that include guide rails 18x, 18y and are *mounted on opposing sides of adjacent plates*.

Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of independent claim 1.

In addition, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of dependent claims 2 and 3 at least because of their dependency from claim 1. In addition, with

¹ Nagaya corresponds to US Pre-grant Publication No. 2004/0099455.

² See original specification at page 13, lines 9-13.

respect to claim 3, Applicant respectfully submits that Asai, which the Examiner alleges as showing an annular dust boot, does not make up for the deficiencies in Nagaya.

New Claim

In addition, Applicant has added new dependent claims 7 and 8 in order to provide additional claimed subject matter. These claims are supported at least by the exemplary embodiment at page 11, lines 17-23.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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